



Climate change communication: A provocative inquiry into motives, meanings, and means

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Abstract:

The deliberately provocative theme of this article is that perceived difficulties in climate change communication (CCC)-e.g., indifference about or denial of climate change's reality, negative consequences, anthropogenic causes, or need to mitigate or adapt to it-are partly the fault of climate change communicators. Fischhoff's model of risk communication development is used to demonstrate that CCC to date has tended to stress persuasion, rather than social movement mobilization or deliberation, and with a focus on the model's early stages. Later stages are not necessarily better, but a more diverse strategy seems superior to a focus perhaps narrowed by empathic, ideological, psychological, and resource constraints. Furthermore, even within persuasion, emphasizing a wider set of values, consequences, and audiences could be fruitful. Social movement mobilization has its own set of weaknesses, but usefully complements persuasion with a focus on developing power, subverting mainstream assumptions, and engaging people in collective action. Deliberation similarly has its drawbacks, but unlike the other two approaches does not define the solution-or even, necessarily, the problem-in advance, and thus offers the chance for people of contending viewpoints to jointly develop concepts and action agendas hitherto unimagined. Simultaneous pursuit of all three strategies can to some degree offset their respective flaws, at the potential cost of diffusion of energies and contradictory messages. Success in CCC is by no means guaranteed by a more diverse set of strategies and self-reflection by communicators, but their pursuit should better reveal CCC's limits.

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Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker, Public

Exposure :

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

General Geographical Feature

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation):

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Mitigation

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article, Review

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified